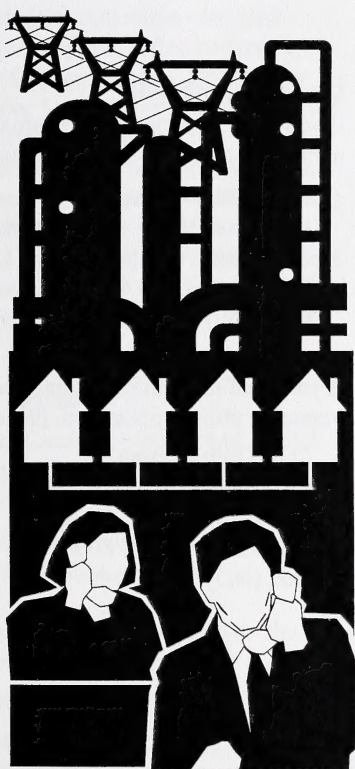




How the EUB Responds to Utility Customer Service Complaints



About This Guide

This guide answers common questions about regulated utilities, how to make a formal complaint to the EUB about your utility service, and how we handle your concerns.

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Contact Information

If you would like general information or assistance with filing a complaint, please contact us at:

EUB Utilities Branch
10th floor, 10055 – 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2Y2
Telephone: (780) 427-4901*
Fax: (780) 427-6970

If you need more information or assistance with a specific utility application, please contact us at

EUB Utilities Branch
5th floor, 640 – 5 Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta T2P 3G4
Telephone: (403) 297-3590*
Fax: (403) 297-6104

* See footnote on page 6.

EUB's Role in Regulating Utilities

What the EUB is

The EUB is the provincial agency that regulates the rates and services of investor-owned utilities. It also is responsible for approving new electric generation facilities and transmission lines.

What the EUB regulates

The EUB regulates a wide range of investor-owned electric, gas, and water utilities. However, ongoing deregulation has affected many aspects of utility regulation.

Electric utilities

Deregulation of the electric industry occurred on January 1, 2001. Residential customers now may remain on a regulated rate system, often referred to as the Regulated Rate Option, or RRO, for a 5-year period ending December 31, 2005, or they may choose to purchase electric service from the retailer of their choice at rates determined in the marketplace. (Note that these rates also include charges for transmission and distribution of power, which continue to be regulated by the EUB.) Additionally, the EUB continues to be responsible for ensuring that customers receive safe and adequate service.

Regulated companies include

- UtiliCorp Networks Canada (Alberta) Ltd., which provides service in the former TransAlta service territory, and
- ATCO Electric Ltd., which serves customers in northern and eastern Alberta.

Regulated Rate Option (RRO) providers under the jurisdiction of the EUB include

- ATCO Electric Ltd., and
- EPCOR Energy Services (Alberta) Inc., with respect to customers within UtiliCorp's service territory (the EUB does not set EPCOR's RRO for customers in the City of Edmonton).

Natural gas

Under deregulation, most consumers have the option to purchase natural gas from the supplier of their choice. However, the EUB continues to regulate

- ATCO Gas, which distributes gas to most of the province,
- AltaGas Utilities Inc., which operates in smaller communities throughout the province, and
- Orr Mineral Developments Ltd., which operates only in Suffield, Alberta.

Making a Complaint About Your Utility Service

It is best to first contact the company directly if you have one of the following concerns about a utility company regulated by the EUB:

- Your utility service has been disconnected, or you are having other problems with your service.
- You believe a utility company has made a mistake in your billing.
- You have questions about installation costs, security deposits, or late-payment penalties.
- You don't agree with the new rates a utility is proposing.
- You have questions about your level of service or impending industry deregulation.

Making a formal complaint to the EUB

If you are not satisfied with the response of your utility company, please contact the EUB by telephone, letter, fax, or e-mail, detailing the nature of the issue, the facts surrounding the complaint, and the action you would like. Please note that complaints need to be received in writing to proceed to a more formal review level at the EUB.

It is important to understand that the EUB's authority to deal with your complaint is limited to certain legislated powers, which mainly include the terms, conditions, and rates under which a regulated utility provides services to its customers. In some situations, your dispute may be beyond the EUB's jurisdiction.

To lodge a complaint about your utility rates or service, contact:

EUB Utilities Branch
10th floor, 10055 – 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2Y2
Telephone: (780) 427-4903*
Fax: (780) 427-6970
E-mail: <Utilities.Concerns@gov.ab.ca>

What happens to your complaint?

EUB staff will let you know by letter that the EUB has received your written complaint. If we do not need an explanation from the utility in question, we will send you information directly from our office. However, usually we contact the utility first and have it report back to us regarding your inquiry. We will then review the utility's response and contact you again by letter, explaining our findings. Sometimes a public hearing may be required to resolve the complaint.

EUB hearings

A hearing is the traditional tool used by the EUB to reach a decision when issues cannot be resolved. It provides all parties involved with the opportunity to publicly express their views in a fair and orderly forum, similar to a court of law.

If a hearing is to be held, the EUB may publish a Notice of Hearing in local newspapers. In response to a notice, anyone with concerns about the issue may submit their views in writing to the EUB and thus become an intervener. A written submission (or intervention) is usually a letter or report that clearly outlines your views and concerns about the issue. A group or association that wishes to present a collective point of view may also be an intervener.

As an applicant or intervener, you may choose to represent yourself at the hearing or be represented by a lawyer. In either case, EUB staff will be available to assist you with any procedural questions.

* See footnote on page 6.

The decision

In making its decision following a hearing, the EUB panel will consider all views of the hearing participants and determine what it feels is in the best interest of the parties involved. As a hearing participant, you will receive a copy of the panel's decision, which includes the reasons for its findings.

If your complaint is outside the EUB's jurisdiction

- For information on retail marketers of natural gas and electric power, contact
Consumer Services Division
 - in northern Alberta, call (780) 427-4088*
 - in southern Alberta, call (403) 297-5700*
or check out the customer choice Web site at
<www.customerchoice.gov.ab.ca>.
- For questions about services provided by retail marketers of natural gas and electric power, contact them directly.
- For concerns about municipally owned utilities, contact your local service provider or your local council members or mayor. The EUB has only limited authority over these utilities, restricted to investigating specific complaints when a consumer believes rates are discriminatory, improperly imposed, or fail to conform to the rate structure established by the municipality.
- For concerns about natural gas cooperatives, contact the co-op manager or directors or the Rural Utilities Branch at

Rural Utilities Branch
Department of Energy
North Tower, Petroleum Plaza
9945 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2G5
Telephone: (780) 427-0125*

Note that the EUB does have a limited complaint authority over natural gas co-ops. It may hear complaints about terms of service, service charges, and rates or tolls if a customer thinks they are discriminatory, improperly imposed, or fail to conform to the co-op's established rate structure.

* See footnote on page 6.

Anyone wishing to receive gas co-op services may file a complaint with the EUB if that service is not provided. These complaints must be sent by registered mail to both the EUB's Chairman and to the Chief Officer of the Rural Utilities Branch.

- For Rural Electrification Associations (REAs), contact the directors of the specific REA or

The Federation of REAs
165 Seneca Road
Sherwood Park, Alberta T8A 4G6
Telephone: (780) 417-3396

- For telecommunications utilities, such as telephone and cable television services, contact

Canadian Radio-Television and
Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N2
Telephone: (819) 997-0313

Where may I get more information?

- The following publication may be of assistance:

Guide 29: EUB Hearings

This and many other documents about the EUB are available free of charge from

EUB Information Services
640 - 5 Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta T2P 3G4
Telephone: (403) 297-8190*

or on the EUB Web site at <www.eub.gov.ab.ca>.

The EUB Web site also provides information on how the EUB establishes natural gas prices. Look for Frequently Asked Questions About Natural Gas Rates and Frequently Asked Questions about Electricity in the Public Information Section on the Web site.

- An up-to-date catalogue of EUB publications, maps, and services (*Guide 1*) is also available on the EUB Web site or from Information Services (see above).

* See footnote on page 6.

More Information

Contact information?

If you would like assistance with filing a complaint, please contact us at

EUB Utilities Branch
10th floor, 10055 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2Y2
Telephone: (780) 427-4903 *
Fax: (780) 427-6970
E-mail: <Utilities.Concerns@gov.ab.ca>

If you need more information or assistance with a specific utility application, please contact us at the above address or at

EUB Utilities Branch
5th floor, 640 - 5 Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta T2P 3G4
Telephone: (403) 297-7174 *
Fax: (403) 297-6104

* *All Government of Alberta phone numbers referenced here are part of the provincial government's RITEdirect telephone system. RITEdirect is a toll-free, long-distance service that public callers may use to reach Alberta Government offices. To call toll free, dial 310-0000 and then enter the 7-digit local number to connect, or press zero and hold for a RITE operator.*

June 2001